

Listing of Claims:

This listing of claims reflects all claim amendments and replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application. Material to be inserted is in **underline**, and material to be deleted is in ~~strikeout~~ or (if the deletion is of five or fewer consecutive characters or would be difficult to see) in double brackets [[]]. Any cancellations are without prejudice.

1 - 9. (Canceled)

10. (New) A method for connecting components, whereby at least one rivet penetrates at least one component, and a closing head is molded on the rivet or any given molded part by means of a molding machine, comprising, prior to the deformation of the closing head on the rivet or the given molded part, determining a rivet projection (U) for the respective determination of at least one molding parameter wherein the rivet projection (U) is calculated in a computing unit from at least one measured value from at least one measuring element, and after determining the rivet projection (U), a correction factor for the molding process is recalculated in the computing unit for each successive riveting operation.

11. (New) The method of claim 10, wherein the molding parameter comprises at least one parameter selected from a molding course, a molding time, and a molding force.

12. (New) The method of claim 10, wherein the correction factor is for correcting the at least one riveting process parameter for determining at least one of the molding course, molding time, and molding force.

13. (New) A method for connecting components, whereby at least one rivet penetrates at least one component, and a closing head is molded on the rivet or any given molded part by means of a molding machine, comprising, prior to the deformation of the closing head or the given molded part, determining the rivet projection (U), and automatically compensating for

deviations of the rivet projection (U) from an allowable value by automatic adjustment of the process variables, a minimum rivet projection U_{\min} or a maximum rivet projection U_{\max} being predefined to produce a tolerance range for the rivet projection U, whereby the rivets which respectively fall below or exceed the rivet projection U_{\min} or U_{\max} are excluded as rejects.

14. (New) The method according to Claim 13, wherein to measure the rivet projection, at least one measuring element is used, the at least one measuring element being a rivet header or being attached thereto.

15. (New) The method of claim 14, wherein the at least one measuring device is a scanning device.

16. (New) The method according to Claim 13, wherein the rivet projection (U) is calculated by the computing unit in real time.

17. (New) The method according to Claim 13, wherein first and second measuring elements are used, which are situated on a common measuring axis, the first and second measuring elements being connected to a rivet spindle which supports the rivet header and traverses the riveting stroke.

18. (New) The method according to Claim 17, wherein the first and second measuring elements are first and second scanning devices, and wherein the second scanning device transmits a signal to the computing unit and the measured value is filed and stored on the measuring axis of the first scanning device.

19. (New) The method according to Claim 17, wherein for the rivet projection (U) which is determined from two measured values by use of the first and second measuring elements, the same measuring axis need not correspond to the actual dimensions of the work piece or the value to be ascertained, but, rather, may be offset with respect to the nominal value that is programmed or represented.

20. (New) The method according to Claim 13, wherein after the projection (U) of the determined component pair is determined, compensation and adjustment is made for the start of riveting in addition to a molding course and molding time, depending on the change in the rivet projection with respect to the actual value for each riveting operation to be performed.

21. (New) The method according to Claim 13, wherein before each molding process, compensation is automatically made for component pairs, and the process parameters for the riveter and/or molding machine are automatically adjusted with respect to the molding operation to be performed, the molding time, and the molding course, depending on the deviation of the value (X) from the allowable and specified rivet projection (U).

22. (New) The method of claim 21, wherein the molding process is a riveting process.

23. (New) The method of claim 21, wherein compensation is automatically made for the determination of the rivet projection.

24. (New) The method of claim 13, wherein the rivets are component pairs.

25. (New) The method of claim 13, wherein the process variables include at least one process variable selected from molding time or molding course.